UNITED
NATIONS

DP

Governing Council
of the
United Nations
Development Programme

Distr.
GENERAL

DP/1991/SR.17
10 June 1991

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GOVERNING COUNCIL

Thirty-eighth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 17th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 5 June 1991, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON (Uruguay)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND

(a) ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR 1990 AND PROGRAMME-LEVEL ACTIVITIES (continued) (DP/1991/28 (Parts I, II and III) and DP/1991/30-35)

1. Mr. VAN ARENDONK (Deputy Executive Director (Programme), United Nations Population Fund), commenting on the proposed successor arrangements for agency support costs (DP/1991/35), said that the Inter-Agency Task Force would monitor implementation of the successor arrangements and had already begun work on defining the functions of the country programme technical support teams. It was hoped to recruit team members from regional institutions since they would have relevant experience. The aim was to set up flexible teams, so that staff would be appointed under the 200 series rules to facilitate changes in team composition. The teams would close the gap between what was available with a country and internationally, and would help to develop self-reliance. The roles of team leaders and country directors did not overlap, one being responsible for management of the team's activities and the other for a specific country.

2. The proposals would not, in essence affect United Nations organs and agencies, so that, for example, the role of the regional economic commissions in providing technical back-stopping would remain unchanged. Equally, training and other regional institutions would not be affected. One difference, however, would be the availability of more regional advisers at headquarters and in the field. The objections to the successor arrangements raised by the United Nations were the result of a misunderstanding of the proposals, and he hoped that discussions would continue with a view to reaching a consensus on the matter.

3. With regard to the financial implications, a total of $89.4 million for technical support services would be required for the period 1992-1995. The cost of recruiting advisers would not be charged to project budgets under the successor arrangements, only the travel and subsistence allowance of team members, where appropriate. Reimbursement of indirect administrative costs had been set at 6 per cent, but that level was currently under review.

4. The proposals were based on identified needs, and it was important to proceed with their implementation so that the Fund could assess whether it had succeeded in devising a better way of dealing with what was a complex situation. The Fund would endeavour to implement the arrangements in a flexible manner as circumstances demanded.

5. Mr. SINGH (Technical and Evaluation Division, United Nations Population Fund), responding to comments on the report of the Executive Director on contraceptive requirements and demand for contraceptive commodities in developing countries in the 1990s (DP/1991/34), said that UNFPA had noted the willingness of the United States to participate in future country-specific studies. The studies would provide general guidelines and would also be further refined so as to focus on specific problems. Such studies were conducted at the request of the countries concerned, not on the initiative of the headquarters staff of the Fund, with a view to determining how needs could be met from a country's own resources and international assistance.

6. The task of the UNFPA Procurement Unit was to procure commodities at the request of recipient countries through the use of competitive bidding. The Unit would assist countries and agencies in the acquisition of contraceptive commodities, if requested. There were no plans to expand the size of the Unit.

7. UNFPA was helping developing countries to establish and expand local production of contraceptive commodities and would continue to do so. The Fund would maintain its cooperation with the World Bank with regard to funding. The consultative group, initially set up to oversee preparation of the study on contraceptive commodities, was open to all countries and agencies involved, with the aim of exchanging information and pooling resources. The Governing Council would be kept fully informed of all developments relating to contraceptive commodity programmes.

8. Mr. KITATANI (Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration, United Nations Population Fund)), commenting on the status of financial implementation of Governing Council-approved UNFPA country programmes and projects and on the work plan for 1992-1995 (DP/1991/30 and 31) said that the projected 10 per cent increase in resources had been supported by some delegations, while others had thought it too optimistic. The Fund had been guided by the goals set in the Amsterdam Declaration, in accordance with which $1.1 billion would be required by the year 2000, a target endorsed by the Development Assistance Committee. The figure had been derived by extrapolating on the basis of UNFPA's experience. The Fund's delivery capacity was expanding and, given the many projects which needed assistance, it should increase its target figures.

9. The work plan was based on a financial planning perspective, but in future would incorporate policy orientations. It would, in practice, be difficult to incorporate multibilateral programming, given that it was subject to negotiations involving a number of donors.

10. With regard to expenditure on country programmes exceeding levels approved by the Governing Council, in 1990 the Fund had delivered $168.9 million in project expenditures, including an advance of $400,000 against 1991 programmable resources. The Fund conducted its work on the basis of estimated resources and expenditures, with adjustments after the fact. Such adjustments were reflected in the subsequent work plan. The capacity to

(Mr. Kitatani)

monitor programme expenditures was being developed through refinement of the information management system. A flexible approach was obviously required in ensuring delivery.

11. The assistance provided for family planning had fallen slightly between 1988 and 1989, but had increased in 1990. It should be noted that assistance in the fields of information, education and communication was closely linked to family planning issues. The Fund was aware of the importance of maternal and child health and family planning.

12. With regard to the categories within the work plan, there might be some overlapping in that some projects, for example, those relating to family planning and women, could move from one category to another as they were implemented. Some thought had been given to assessing the percentage of specific projects falling within different categories.

13. With respect to the distribution of programmable resources among country and intercountry activities and services, indicated in table G in document DP/1991/30, the technical support services component, which was directly related to country activities, was 9 per cent, so that the overall figure for country activities was higher than the 67.9 per cent stated in the table. With regard to table H, while there had been a small decline, of less than 1 per cent, in the figure for Asia and the Pacific, the amount had increased in absolute terms. The adjustment had been necessary to make resources available for Africa. The Fund applied the criteria for transparency established by the Governing Council.

14. Dr. SADIK (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund) said that the present system of arrangements for agency support costs was inadequate and needed to be changed. Member States held the Fund accountable for resources managed on their behalf and also for the success or failure of projects and programmes. The Fund was making a proposal to help it deliver a better system and it hoped for their support in that regard.

15. UNFPA was making headway in all regions in promoting the concept of integrated national maternal and child health/family planning plans, thanks to the new programme review and strategy development process. Under her personal initiative, the Fund had renewed efforts for coordination with the World Bank, all the regional development banks and other financial institutions.

16. Regarding the UNFPA strategy for sub-Saharan Africa, the Fund would be carrying out policy-oriented studies on migration trends in the West African subregion in cooperation with the Union for African Population Studies. In view of the importance of structural adjustment programmes in Africa, UNFPA would be assigning a demographer/economist to the World Bank to ensure that population was taken into account in social dimension of adjustment (SDA) programmes and in the policy packages of structural adjustment programmes. The project would start in 1991 and would continue in the next cycle of the intercountry programme for sub-Saharan Africa. Furthermore, UNFPA would be

(Dr. Sadik)

supporting the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in the establishment of a population commission, through which the Fund would be able to put population on the agenda of the meeting of Heads of State and Government of OAU member States.

17. There was considerable cooperation at the field level between UNIFEM and UNFPA in the area of women, population and development, as for instance in a project to strengthen national machinery for women in Botswana, an income-generating and population education project for women in Mali and the strengthening of the gender factor of data collection activities in India. The Fund had also cooperated in the production of a monograph entitled The World's Women 1970-1990, which would serve as an authoritative statistical account of the evolution of women's role during the past 20 years. Periodically, the Fund issued an update on its activities regarding HIV/AIDS, which highlighted action taken with respect to women and HIV/AIDS. Regarding the percentage of women employed by the Fund, UNFPA had set itself the immediate goal of ensuring that 50 per cent of its professional staff were women.

18. UNFPA was deeply gratified that the United States Government had decided to commit $500,000 towards the cost of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development. Regarding the Fund's activities in relation to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), there were three clusters of activities: a UNFPA staff member had been seconded to the UNCED secretariat, the Fund had convened an expert meeting on population and environment in March 1991, and it had prepared two major publications on the relationship between population and the environment. Secondly, UNFPA field offices had been asked to work closely with Governments on national preparations for UNCED, with a view to giving population factors and trends due importance in national substantive preparations for UNCED. Thirdly, at the country level, UNFPA continued to support national research and studies and information, education and communication activities.

19. Under its intercountry programme for 1992-1995, UNFPA intended to promote further studies on various specific aspects of South-South and South-North migration. The Fund, together with WHO, would assess condom requirements in relation to HIV/AIDS. It would also increase its efforts to promote technical cooperation among developing countries. With regard to priority countries, the Fund wished to reach its 80 per cent target for the allocation of resources to those countries as quickly as possible.

20. The Fund had earlier that year chosen two recipients for the 1991 United Nations Population Award: Julia Henderson, a pioneer and leader of the international population movement for four decades, and the Centro de Estudios de Población y Paternidad Responsable (CEPAR), an Ecuadorian non-governmental organization that had made positive contributions in the implementation of a population policy and strategy.

(Dr. Sadik)

21. The Fund agreed with many delegations about the need to carefully adapt policies and programmes to the socio-cultural context, to give the utmost care to human rights issues, to ensure that communities and individuals participated actively in programme design and implementation and to direct population and family planning activities at men, adolescents and other new or hard-to-reach target groups. As to monitoring and evaluation, by 1992 the Fund might have data for assessing the impact of its programmes in 103 countries.

22. UNFPA was grateful to many of its major donors, including Australia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, for their special efforts to increase their 1991 contribution. The Government of Romania had also increased its contribution substantially. She appealed once again to the United States Government to join the world consensus and resume its support for UNFPA.

UNITED NATIONS TECHNICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES (DP/1991/41 and Add.1-3, DP/1991/42)

23. Mr. JI Chaozhu (Under-Secretary-General, Department of Technical Cooperation for Development) said that the decisions taken at the current session of the Governing Council might determine the very future of United Nations multilateral technical cooperation. The world was at a critical juncture in history. With the end of the cold war, the United Nations was beginning to function politically in the manner envisaged by the Charter. Its role had never been more important in promoting international cooperation. At a time when it had been able to achieve tangible progress on a number of political issues, it was clear that real political stability must be based on economic opportunity and social progress.

24. One of the main goals of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade was a decisive strengthening of international development cooperation. The United Nations system was firmly committed to achieving that goal. In adopting General Assembly resolution 44/211 on the comprehensive triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, Member States had committed themselves to strengthening national execution. The Governing Council, in its decision 90/26 on agency support costs, had begun the difficult task of implementing the new approach. The Council was on the brink of historic decisions that would affect the very future of United Nations multilateral technical cooperation into the next century. Never before had the gap between the needs of developing countries and the resources available to meet them been greater.

25. The Department of Technical Cooperation for Development (DTCD) was the main technical cooperation arm of the United Nations and had close to 100 technical experts operating in 12 sectors, including mineral resources, energy, remote sensing, economic policy and planning, population and integrated rural development. In 1990, the Department had implemented

(Mr. Ji Chaozhu)

projects costing $181 million in developing countries around the world. On an annual basis, the Department procured through international competitive bidding over $40 million of equipment and $20 million in specialized services. The Department contracted with major companies world wide and the leading institutions which had the state-of-the-art expertise that developing countries required. DTCD provided short-term technical advisory services at no cost to developing countries and organized training workshops for experts from developing countries on important sectoral issues.

26. One of the main areas of emphasis in the report of the Secretary-General on United Nations technical cooperation activities (DP/1991/41 and Add.1-3) was the Department's responsiveness to a number of international priority issues. Governing Council decision 90/34 outlined six UNDP priority areas for the fifth programming cycle. DTCD was significantly involved in all those areas. Those priorities were dealt with thematically in document DP/1991/41 and sectorally in document DP/1991/41/Add.1.

27. Another area emphasized in the report was responsiveness to the encouragement and requests arising from Governing Council decision 90/37, which indicated several ways to increase cooperation between UNDP and DTCD. UNFPA was urged to continue to make full use of the Department's capacity for programme formulation, sectoral analysis and technical backstopping in population activities.

28. Several recent resolutions and decisions and a number of recent studies had focused renewed attention on the tripartite relationship between Governments, UNDP or UNFPA, and United Nations agencies, analysing how the basic principle underlying United Nations development activities remained valid in the light of evolving circumstances. In the current world situation, the demand for the resources, expertise and services of the United Nations development system was strong and growing. The challenge was to enable all parts of the system to perform at their best and cooperate effectively. The growth of national execution, for example, altered but by no means decreased the importance of United Nations support.

29. Each of the various substantive and programmatic areas called for contributions from the system as a whole. UNDP played a central role by providing funds and guidance for the common effort, pooling the capabilities of agency partners, providing the services of resident representatives not only for the funding agency but also for entities like DTCD which had no separate field representation, and providing United Nations resident coordinators for the operational activities of the entire system.

30. The future arrangements for United Nations multilateral technical cooperation would be heavily influenced by the successor support cost arrangements currently under consideration. In considering that highly complex issue, the Council should bear in mind paragraph 1 of its decision 90/26, which stressed that the new arrangements should be structured to

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strengthen the capacities for technical support, promote coherence and coordination, and continue to reflect the principles of tripartite partnership as a distinctive characteristic of development assistance, irrespective of execution modality.

31. The Department had been conducting in-depth consultations with UNFPA and UNDP to reach a consensus on future arrangements and ensure a smooth transition from the existing arrangements. DTCD executed a substantial programme for UNFPA and had, in good faith, undertaken intensive consultations with senior officials of the Fund concerning successor arrangements for UNFPA projects. In those consultations, it had become clear that the proposals being advanced extended well beyond the issue of support costs and were designed to establish an entirely new system in order to drastically alter the delivery of technical assistance in the population field. The fundamental issue was a proposed arrangement whereby UNFPA would become an executing agency. That had not been the intention of Member States in adopting decision 90/26.

32. In its relationship with the United Nations, UNFPA should remain a funding agency, while DTCD or the regional commissions, as appropriate, continued to act as executing agencies at the country and regional levels. The United Nations role in the formulation of population policy had been established long before the Fund had come into existence. The proposed arrangement would drastically reduce the Organization's role in programme and project activities and deny developing countries access to perhaps the largest and best organized source of multidisciplinary expertise in the population field available within the United Nations system. The UNFPA proposals, if accepted, would in time diminish and fragment the technical and substantive capabilities of the system to the point of destroying them. It was hard to understand how that could possibly serve the interests of developing countries or of UNFPA itself.

33. He hoped that the Council would recognize the dangers of transforming UNFPA into an executing agency and abandoning the tripartite relationship that had served its operations so well, and would allow time for all concerned to give serious consideration to alternative possibilities that would make use of the strong substantive capacity within DTCD and other parts of the United Nations system in the population field.

34. Concerning the proposed arrangements with UNDP, he pointed out that while one could only welcome steps to strengthen programmatic approaches to redressing development problems, action to deal with those problems could come about only through the formulation and implementation of projects. Governing Council decision 90/26 established a new programmatic facility, Technical Services Support. The Department welcomed the new facility for technical services in support of developing countries in the context of the new programme orientation, and regarded its work as additional to that covered by existing support cost arrangements.

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35. With regard to projects, the provisions of decision 90/26 concerning technical support at the project level raised serious concerns that should be carefully considered. Technical support at the project level was envisaged as being provided in relation to the various phases of the project cycle. The Department's consultations with UNDP suggested that the resources to be made available for that purpose would be grossly inadequate to meet the servicing requirements of developing countries. Moreover, the success of national execution might be jeopardized if, as a result of budgetary constraints, agencies were unable to provide technical services when they were most needed.

36. A third element of the new system outlined in Governing Council decision 90/26 related to administrative and operational support for projects. Under the proposed new system, developing countries would have to pay for services rendered by large executing agencies such as DTCD from their scarce IPF resources. If a Government turned to the Office for Project Services (OPS) or the World Bank to provide operational support services, the costs of providing such services would be borne by UNDP itself from the central resources at its disposal. Such a system would, for economic reasons alone, induce most Governments to turn to OPS or the World Bank, instead of one of the major technical or specialized agencies, for assistance even though those agencies might have the experience and technical expertise that was most relevant to their particular needs.

37. He regretted to say that there was due cause for serious concern. If the proposed arrangements for the future conduct of technical cooperation activities were instituted without modification, the result could be a substantial marginalization of the role of the United Nations and the specialized agencies concerned, at the expense of developing countries. It would represent de facto abrogation of the valuable tripartite partnership, which ensured political neutrality, unconditionality, commercial disinterestedness and shared responsibility. It would weaken the technical services developed over many years within the United Nations, and would give an overwhelming role to OPS and the World Bank as the main providers of support services to Governments.

38. The Governing Council and all Member States should bear in mind the concerns expressed by the Joint Inspection Unit in its 1984 report to the General Assembly on the Office for Project Execution, the predecessor of OPS (A/39/80). The report stated that successive legislative mandates over the past decade had in effect removed whatever institutional limitations in the United Nations system might have justified the creation of OPE in the early 1970s. The Inspectors had also pointed out that UNDP was the only major executing agency of the United Nations system without an institutionalized technical brain to guide its field operations. As a result, technical backstopping was the most vulnerable aspect of OPE-executed projects. Citing a number of weaknesses associated with OPE subcontracting, the report referred to lack of adequate technical monitoring of the work of subcontractors, insufficient knowledge of the host country, UNDP rules and the system's

(Mr. Ji Chaozhu)

technical cooperation policies, insufficient emphasis on the need to transfer skills to nationals, preponderant reliance on external inputs in project implementation and little reliance on domestic organizations, consultants and material resources.

39. The JIU report went on to express the belief that OPE was to some extent duplicating the delivery capacity available within the United Nations system and that its operational activities constituted an unwelcome precedent for other United Nations funding organizations such as UNEP and UNFPA. The Inspectors had further stated that it was difficult to justify having OPE act on behalf of UNDP as an executing agency when it had no specialized expertise of its own, and had recommended that the Governing Council provide new terms of reference for UNDP direct execution and that the staff and other resources of OPE be correspondingly reduced over a three-year period.

40. He commended document A/39/80 to the Council for further consideration. It should be noted that the volume of projects executed by OPS had increased to three to four times the level prevailing at the time of the appraisal undertaken by JIU in 1984.

41. A recent study prepared by the Nordic countries suggested that consideration might be given to merging DTCD and OPS. Although there might be merit in doing so since that would lead to considerable savings and eliminate duplication, there was no particular justification for merging only the Department with UNDP. In view of the essential distinction between a funding agency and an executing agency, the best approach would be to separate OPS from UNDP and incorporate it into DTCD. A recent study on the UNDP senior management structure had noted that the very existence of OPS gave rise to basic questions about the United Nations system of development assistance, questions which required fundamental institutional and policy decisions at the highest level.

42. He stressed the current close cooperation between UNDP and the Department and hoped that the recent consultations in the context of Governing Council decision 90/37 would lead to an even closer working relationship which maximized the strengths of each of them in the interests of developing countries. The Department viewed implementation of the main elements of that decision as the basis for greater cooperation in a broad range of efforts. The comparative strengths and capabilities of UNDP and DTCD could be utilized to greater advantage, since there were many areas where the technical expertise and administrative competence of DTCD could be used. Nevertheless, the closer relationship must not be one simply of cooperation between OPS and the Department but should evolve into a number of broader cooperative initiatives between DTCD and UNDP as equal partners.

43. UNDP had indicated that greater consultation and participation would be ensured in the future on matters of mutual interest. DTCD, for its part, wished to continue to explore several such opportunities in the coming

(Mr. Ji Chaozhu)

months. It also looked forward to further discussions with UNFPA which, it hoped, would lead to agreement on successor arrangements and cooperation in the interests of developing countries.

44. The Council should recognize that the Department and other specialized agencies possessed a great deal of expertise, substantive research and related capabilities, which were placed at the disposal of developing countries in supporting UNDP-funded projects under the current system. Since the new approaches being proposed by UNDP and UNFPA would reduce developing countries' access to the agencies' expertise, they were likely to jeopardize countries' access to the broader capabilities that had developed under the agencies' regular budget programmes. The Council should have a clear understanding of how the proposed new arrangements were expected to function operationally within UNDP and in the field, and how that modus operandi would affect the access of developing countries to the technical capabilities and services of the United Nations system. Whatever arrangements the Governing Council decided upon, they should preserve the tripartite partnership, be uniformly applicable to all programmes and agencies of the system, and guarantee continued access for developing countries to the technical expertise and experience of the United Nations system.

45. Mr. EDGREN (Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation, United Nations Development Programme) said that the report by the Administrator on cooperation between the United Nations Development Programme and the Department for Technical Cooperation for Development (DP/1991/42) highlighted areas of cooperation between the two organizations and referred to the joint task force set up in 1984 which had looked into the possibility of closer cooperation and integration of the project management and support activities of OPE and DTCD. The joint task force had drawn up draft guidelines to serve as a basis for future closer cooperation between UNDP (OPS) and the Department. It was hoped that the draft guidelines would be finalized in the near future.

46. In the meantime, agreement had been reached between UNDP and DTCD for the Department to participate as an observer in meetings of the OPS Project Acceptance Committee. It was hoped that that arrangement would lead to greater participation by DTCD as an associate agency in projects under direct UNDP execution and to more rational utilization of the logistical and administrative support project execution facilities of the two organizations. UNDP was fully committed to closer cooperation with the Department in order to eliminate duplication of administrative support activities and involve DTCD more actively in various aspects of UNDP activities.

47. Ms. STAMATOPOULOU-ROBBINS (United Nations Centre for Human Rights) referred to the "Human Development Report, 1991", the introduction to which stated that it was about human freedom and the process of human development, about the sensible reallocation of resources to serve humanity better by involving as many people as possible in the creative use of those resources rather than only a few vested interests, and about participatory development

(Ms. Stamatopoulou-Robbins)

where people were placed at the centre of decision-making. The adoption of those criteria was a gratifying achievement. To assert that there was a right to development, as the General Assembly had forcefully done, was to proclaim that the benefits of development should accrue to the individual in the context of the active exercise of his or her rights and freedoms. Development and human rights were interdependent, complementary, indivisible and mutually reinforcing.

48. The Centre's programme of advisory services and technical assistance and cooperation in the field of human rights was proving to be an effective instrument for contributing to the development process by encouraging wide popular participation based on adherence to human rights norms. The programme was offered in response to requests from Governments or other qualified entities, was tailored to the needs of the requesting party, was executed so as to reflect the full range of the standards and implementation procedures applied by the United Nations, made use of the best available expertise and endeavoured to be innovative.

49. Among other types of assistance, the programme helped to build or strengthen national or regional human rights institutions and infrastructures; draft new democratic constitutions; organize free and fair political elections; develop democratic legislation and set up supervisory machinery; train law enforcement officers and administrators of justice; award human rights fellowships; and translate into local languages and print international human rights instruments.

50. The concept of democratic participation was central to the achievement of sustainable development. The value of technical cooperation and assistance programmes would be immensely enhanced by incorporating the key parameters of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Centre for Human Rights was prepared to contribute to that task to the best of its ability, and the requirements and aspirations of developing countries would receive priority attention.

51. Mr. AEAZ (Malaysia) took note of the main substantive areas in which DTCD was involved and expressed concern that, in the attempts to cover as many areas of development as possible, the Department might duplicate the efforts of other specialized agencies of the United Nations system and so use resources less effectively. It was Malaysia's view that the Department should concentrate its activities in areas within its competence. By streamlining its activities, it would enhance the quality of its services while optimizing its resource use. The proposal to limit the Department's activities was motivated only by a desire to avoid unnecessary and unhealthy competition for projects among United Nations agencies.

52. In Malaysia, the Department had helped develop a new mining code, model agreement and mineral title system, a project on airborne geophysical surveys in Sarawak and, most recently, a project on the development of the economy of

(Mr. Aeaz, Malaysia)

the state of Kedah. His Government had recently been rather dissatisfied with the Department's services, particularly with reference to the Kedah project. Delays in designating experts for the project had made it unlikely that it would be able to provide timely inputs for the 1993 mid-term review of Malaysia's Sixth Plan. Also, there was a tendency for the Department's experts to be recruited from one particular region or school of thought. His Government, like any other recipient country, would like executing agencies to propose suitable experts from as many countries as possible.

53. He suggested that the reference to Sarawak in paragraph 42 of document DP/1991/41/Add.1 should be corrected so as to clarify the political status of Sarawak, which was a state of Malaysia, not an independent, sovereign State.

54. His delegation noted that there was no consistency in the information which the report gave on the various agencies. The amount of technical assistance was clearly quoted for some, but not for others. That information was important, as it would indicate the financial resources invested for technical assistance and the areas where the agencies provided assistance. Member Governments could then explore the possibility of using the agencies' technical assistance.

55. His Government expressed its appreciation to the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control for its support to Malaysia's narcotics control and prevention programmes, and was especially supportive of the Fund's effort to develop subregional strategies where drug problems were particularly serious. The success of such strategies depended upon the willingness of neighbouring countries to commit themselves to joint operations. There was, however, a tendency for the Fund to focus on supply-reduction programmes; he hoped that the Fund would be more assertive in convincing donor countries that priority should be given to demand-reduction programmes.

56. Mr. SORENSEN (Denmark), speaking also on behalf of Finland, Norway and Sweden welcomed initiatives to promote closer cooperation between OPS and DTCD. The Nordic countries hoped that such cooperation would result in a more effective division of labour, thereby reducing costs, eliminating duplication of administrative support activities and, in the end, optimizing technical support activities in recipient countries. The process was too slow, however. A joint task force had been established in August 1984 with the purpose of exploring ways and means of promoting closer collaboration between DTCD and UNDP's Office for Projects Execution in the use of their respective capabilities. Draft guidelines had been drawn up but never applied. Since then, only small steps had been taken and cooperative initiatives had been taken on an ad hoc basis and not as part of an overall agreement. The Nordic countries felt that the time had come, or rather was overdue, for the two organizations to explore their future relationship in depth.

57. The final report of the Nordic project on the reform of the United Nations in the economic field had proposed that in order to avoid duplication

(Mr. Sorensen, Denmark)

of effort and make savings, consideration should be given to incorporating DTCD into OPS. Without going that far, the Nordic Governments agreed that the issue of cooperation between DTCD and OPS should be considered in a much broader perspective and that the advantages of a merger should be seriously considered. A more detailed analysis of each entity's capabilities was clearly needed, and the Nordic countries looked forward to a comprehensive report on the matter as a basis for discussions on a possible recommendation to the General Assembly. They suggested that the Governing Council should adopt a decision requesting such a report.

58. Mr. ZHANG Guanghui (China) said that his delegation saw DTCD as the major player in multilateral cooperation, and one that had consistently given assistance to developing countries. The total value of its projects over the past year had been $181 million, which was $19 million more than the previous year, with an 80 per cent delivery rate. The General Assembly, in its resolution 44/211, had recognized the significance of national execution in helping recipient countries become more self-reliant and had made national execution the model for regulating technical assistance.

59. The Department had accumulated expertise in many scientific and technical fields and had always been the major executing agency for projects and programmes funded by UNDP. His delegation hoped that the Department would make the fullest use of its technical expertise while giving free rein to development in recipient countries. Cooperation between UNDP and the Department should be broad and extensive; the two should join in clarifying their respective operational spheres, so as to avoid overlapping, especially in public administration and technical support activities.

60. Mr. SAHLMANN (Germany) welcomed the Nordic countries' proposal for a comprehensive report on cooperation between DTCD and OPS. The idea of engaging an independent consultant seemed a good one, as the question had been open for years without any solution being found.

61. Mr. SOUTTER (Canada) expressed some sympathy for Malaysia with respect to the Department's operations which had been somewhat opportunistic in recent years. A review of the future relationship between the Department and OPS was long overdue.

62. Mr. CHEKAU (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said he believed that the Department and the USSR could cooperate successfully. The documents before the Council illustrated the dynamic development of the Department and its active role in assisting developing countries. The increased volume of projects over the past few years spoke for itself. He questioned whether such dynamic development should be interrupted by restructuring, for instance by a merger with OPS. Any such action should be approached with great caution. The documents showed that the Department was carrying out a broad range of activities, including some new departures. He understood its wish to diversify, and welcomed such diversification provided that it did not result in any duplication of effort.

(Mr. Chekau, USSR)

63. Many aspects of the successor arrangements, although not strictly pertinent to the agenda item under discussion, were extremely important to DTCD, and the concern of the Under-Secretary-General of the Department was understandable. The Department was the Secretariat's main representative in technical cooperation, although not the only one. The Soviet Union carried out broad cooperation within the framework of the DTCD quite fruitfully, and hoped that that cooperation would grow.

64. Mr. BOGNER (Austria) expressed full support for the proposal made by the representative of Denmark, as endorsed by the representatives of Canada and Germany. His delegation too would welcome the submission, as soon as possible, of a detailed study on the possibility of closer cooperation - or even a merger - between DTCD and OPS.

65. Mr. SHOJI (Japan) said that his delegation was pleased to note the active role of DTCD in Africa and the least developed countries and its focus on national capacity building and human resources development. It regarded cooperation with DTCD as a valuable way of enlarging the scope of the assistance it provided to African countries: thanks to the expertise of DTCD, the Africa Initiative project had produced positive results.

66. While DTCD had developed a valuable breadth of expertise, it had undertaken activities in such disparate fields that the overall impact might be diminished. Note should be taken of the need to improve sustainability. As to the question of cooperation with UNDP, the objective of a more effective division of labour remained to be fulfilled. The participation of DTCD in the OPS Project Acceptance Committee was a step in the right direction, but both DTCD and UNDP should be working to promote broader joint initiatives. His delegation was somewhat disappointed that the report contained no specific information either on areas of duplication or on ways to strengthen cooperation. The proposals made by the delegation of Denmark and others for a restructuring of DTCD were of great interest and deserved serious consideration at the next session of the Governing Council.

67. Mr. JI Chaozhu (Under-Secretary-General, Department of Technical Cooperation for Development), replying to comments by Council members, informed the representative of Malaysia that he would look into the kedah project as a matter of urgency and ensure that schedules were kept as far as possible in line with the original plans. While agreeing that the experts selected should be the best available, regardless of their nationality, he understood that the selection in the case concerned had been a result of insistence by the Government of Malaysia.

68. With regard to the relationship between DTCD and UNDP, it was of course very important to avoid any wastage of resources. Intensive consultations with UNDP had not yet yielded any substantive results, but he looked forward to further consultations and would welcome an independent study.

(Mr. Ji Chaozhu)

69. In conclusion, he welcomed the prospect of enhanced cooperation with the Soviet Union and hoped to be in a position to report further progress at the next session of the Governing Council.

70. Ms. POLLACK (United States of America) endorsed the proposal made by the Nordic countries, Germany and Canada and said she hoped that a further study on cooperation between DTCD and OPS would be submitted to the Council's thirty-ninth session.

71. Mr. MOYE (United Kingdom) said that his delegation had, as long ago as 1984, felt that a merger of DTCD and OPS would be desirable. It therefore strongly supported the proposal for a broad review of the issue and hoped that the Governing Council would call for a report to be submitted at the next session.

The meeting rose at 6.25 p.m.